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RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/48/L.47 and Add.1)]

48/57. Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance of the United Nations

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991 and 47/168 of 22 December 1992,

Reaffirming also the guiding principles contained in section I of the annex to its resolution 46/182,

Noting that States have submitted replies to the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraphs 7 and 8 of its resolution 47/168,

Taking note of the relevant decisions of operational agencies, organizations, programmes and funds of the United Nations system concerning their participation in a coordinated response to humanitarian emergencies,

Deeply concerned about the increasing number and growing magnitude and complexity of natural disasters and other emergencies,

Concerned about the impediments created by natural disasters and other emergencies to the efforts of the affected countries to achieve development,

Emphasizing the importance of a timely, prompt and effective humanitarian response,

Stressing the importance of a coordinated response to natural disasters and of technical and financial assistance to the natural-disaster-prone countries in the fields of disaster preparedness and mitigation, including exchange of information and post-disaster development activities,

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Noting the encouraging results of the operation of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund and its increasing utilization by the operational agencies,

Recognizing the increasing need for humanitarian assistance and adequate financial resources to ensure a prompt response by the United Nations to humanitarian emergency situations, both for relief and for the continuum to development,

Recognizing also the need to strengthen coordination further, in particular field coordination, on humanitarian assistance, bearing in mind that coordination should be field-oriented,

Noting also the humanitarian and rehabilitation aspects of the problem of mine clearance, in the context of its resolution 48/7 of 19 October 1993,

Welcoming the efforts being undertaken in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to develop a coherent and complementary approach on the part of the relevant operational and development actors to the continuum-related activities,

Stressing the need for adequate protection of personnel involved in humanitarian operations in accordance with relevant norms and principles of international law and within the context of General Assembly resolutions 47/120 A of 18 December 1992 and 47/120 B of 20 September 1993, taking into account recent initiatives in this regard, 1/

1. Takes note of the report of the Secretary-General; 2/

2. Agrees fully with the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council, 3/ the implementation of which will be reviewed by the Council at its substantive session of 1994;

3. Emphasizes the leadership role of the Secretary-General, through the Emergency Relief Coordinator and working closely with him, in coordinating a coherent and timely response to humanitarian emergencies;

4. Stresses the essential need for improved coordination within the United Nations system, and, while reaffirming the mandate and functions of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs to that end, requests the Emergency Relief Coordinator to improve coordination and management further, both at Headquarters and at the field level, including the coordination of the work of the relevant operational agencies;

1/ See Security Council resolution 868 (1993) of 29 September 1993, A/48/349-S/26358 and General Assembly resolutions 48/37 of 9 December 1993 and 48/42 of 10 December 1993.

2/ A/48/536.

3/ See Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Supplement No. 3 (A/48/3/Rev.1), chap. III.

5. Invites the intergovernmental bodies of the relevant operational organizations and agencies to provide full support for system-wide coordination, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in order to facilitate an effective response at Headquarters and at the field level to natural disasters and other emergencies;

6. Also stresses, in this regard, that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, under the leadership of the Emergency Relief Coordinator, should serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination, meet more frequently and act therefore in an action-oriented manner on policy issues related to humanitarian assistance and on formulating a coherent and timely United Nations response to humanitarian emergencies;

7. Further stresses the necessity of accelerating the development of an emergency information system, within the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, to collect and disseminate timely information on natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, including information provided by the national Government, United Nations agencies, donors and relief organizations, to provide early warning of a crisis, to assess needs on a continuing basis and to track financial and other contributions;

8. Recognizes the need to increase the resources available in the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, including through timely repayment of funds, invites potential donors to make additional contributions to the Fund, and requests the Secretary-General to conduct consultations to that effect, taking fully into account the need to secure contributions to the Fund on an assured, broad-based and additional basis;

9. Decides to expand the scope of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to include the International Organization for Migration;

10. Invites operational agencies to contribute to field-level coordination in the early stages of an emergency;

11. Requests the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to agree, as a matter of urgency, on the best means and guidelines to ensure adequate human and financial resources for rapid response coordination, including the provision of resources that could be drawn on by the Emergency Relief Coordinator for establishing special coordination arrangements in the initial stage of an emergency, taking into account the relevant provisions of General Assembly resolutions 46/182 and 47/199 of 22 December 1992 and of the agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council related to field-level coordination; 4/

12. Decides also, pending a final decision to be taken by the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994, on the basis of the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, as well as on the experience gained, to authorize, in exceptional circumstances, on a time-bound basis and while preserving the revolving nature of the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, the Emergency Relief Coordinator and relevant operational

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4/ Ibid., chap. III, sect. A, paras. 18-20 of the agreed conclusions.

agencies, under the leadership of the Coordinator, to draw from the interest earned by the Revolving Fund to enhance rapid response coordination where insufficient capacity exists at the field level;

13. Also requests the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to provide recommendations on other issues related to field coordination, including measures taken for clear allocations of responsibilities at an early stage of an emergency, in particular by entrusting the primary responsibility to the operational agencies, as appropriate, and on standardized procedures for joint emergency needs assessment missions, under the overall leadership and coordination of the Emergency Relief Coordinator;

14. Requests the Secretary-General to include in his annual report on the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance recommendations on practical measures to enhance the coordinated system-wide support for efforts to facilitate the transition from emergency relief to rehabilitation and development and, particularly in the context of activities of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction, the promotion of national capacity-building to help prevent and mitigate future emergencies;

15. Also requests the Secretary-General to continue to strengthen the consolidated appeals process, making it more field-oriented, and to ensure that such appeals are based on specific priorities resulting from comprehensive and realistic projections of relief requirements for natural disasters and other emergencies requiring a coordinated response, and in this context invites all concerned operational and humanitarian organizations and agencies to cooperate and fully participate in the preparation of these appeals;

16. Calls upon States to respond quickly and generously to consolidated appeals for humanitarian assistance, taking into account rehabilitation and long-term development requirements;

17. Invites the Secretary-General to examine further all possible ways and means to provide, within existing resources, adequate qualified personnel and administrative resources commensurate with the responsibilities of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs in dealing with the increasing number of natural disasters and other emergencies;

18. Stresses the importance of the Emergency Relief Coordinator participating fully in the overall United Nations planning of responses to emergencies in order to serve as the humanitarian advocate in ensuring that the humanitarian dimension, particularly the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality of relief assistance, is taken fully into account;

19. Emphasizes the importance of the role of the Emergency Relief Coordinator in facilitating access by the operational organizations to emergency areas for the rapid provision of emergency assistance by obtaining the consent of all parties concerned, through modalities such as the establishment of temporary relief corridors where needed, days and zones of tranquillity and other forms, including facilitating for those organizations the return of refugees and displaced persons;

20. Requests the Secretary-General to include in his annual report to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session recommendations on ways and means to improve the operational capacity of the emergency stockpiles, as well

as an analysis of the advantages or disadvantages, including promptness of the response and cost-effectiveness, of the establishment of regional warehouses, taking into account the existing facilities and the possibility of strengthening them;

21. Also requests the Secretary-General to include in his report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1994 the recommendations of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee requested in paragraphs 11 and 13 of the present resolution;

22. Further requests the Secretary-General to include in his annual report on the coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session information on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution and on ways of further strengthening coordination of humanitarian emergency assistance within the United Nations system.

78th plenary meeting
14 December 1993